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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 06MANAGUA854, PLC EAGER FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH USG, BUT NOT

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### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06MANAGUA854**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">06MANAGUA854</a>	<a href="#">2006-04-18 22:48</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Managua</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>  
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<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>  
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 000854

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/17/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NU](#)

SUBJECT: PLC EAGER FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH USG, BUT NOT  
WILLING TO SUBMIT CANDIDATE TO PRIMARIES

REF: A. MANAGUA 0738

[B](#). MANAGUA 0709

[C](#). MANAGUA 0807 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Paul Trivelli for reasons 1.4(b and d)

[1](#). (C) Summary: Senior representatives of Nicaragua's Liberal Constitutional Party (PLC) have informed Ambassador that the party is willing to "negotiate and make sacrifices" to achieve Liberal unity and defeat the Sandinista Front (FSLN), but are adamant that Jose Rizo is the chosen presidential candidate of the PLC, and the party will not submit this position to multi-party primaries. The representatives told Ambassador on April 17 that the PLC may allow the vice presidential and deputy candidates to be chosen via primaries. The group, which included emissaries from parties allied with the PLC as well as Maria Fernanda Flores, PLC leader Arnoldo Aleman's wife and "personal representative," varied the professed strength of their support for their convicted leader, but all indicated that saving Nicaragua from Sandinismo is more important than sidelining Aleman. The Ambassador reiterated that we cannot maintain friendly relations with a party controlled by a convicted felon; if the PLC desires good relations with us, it needs to separate from Aleman, reform its leadership structure, and hold multi-party primaries. The Ambassador declined the PLC's suggestion that, rather than supporting multi-party primaries, the Embassy help broker negotiations among these parties (a deal which could well seal Rizo's candidacy, with the possibility of Eduardo Montealegre as his running mate). End Summary.

[2](#). (C) Ambassador and Emboffs met with PLC representatives on April 17 at PLC president Jorge Castillo Quant's invitation to discuss the Ambassador's multi-party primary proposal (ref B). The PLC spun the meeting in the press in advance as a make up session between the party and the USG. Indeed, the true theme of the meeting was how to achieve "Liberal unity" in general, as the PLC officers made clear from the beginning that they would not submit their presidential candidate to multi-party primaries. The tone of the meeting was generally cordial, though the inevitable topic of Arnoldo Aleman's role in the party caused visible tension. PLC attendees included Jorge Castillo Quant, PLC president; Jose Rizo, PLC presidential candidate; Wilfredo Navarro, PLC first vice president; Noel Ramirez, PLC secretary; Leonel Teller, PLC spokesman; Rene Herrera, PLC magistrate on the Supreme Electoral Council (CSE); Oscar Moncada, PLC National Assembly deputy; Maria Fernanda Flores de Aleman; and representatives from PLC-allied parties.

RIZO IS OUR CANDIDATE

13. (C) The PLC representatives were adamant that the party has selected Jose Rizo as its presidential candidate via internal "primaries" and that this position is no longer open for negotiation with potential allies. Wilfredo Navarro commented that consensus would be very difficult to achieve on the proposed supervisory committee between political entities with such an "imbalance" of power, the PLC towering over all other parties. Noel Ramirez allowed, however, that the party may be willing to open the vice presidential and departmental deputy positions to primaries. (Comment: The proposal to allow the deputy positions to be determined by primaries instead of the personal selection of Aleman and his circle of lackeys is new. End Comment.) Ultimately, Castillo Quant agreed to formally respond to the Ambassador's letter with a counter-proposal detailing the positions the PLC is willing to compete.

AMBASSADOR: WE CANNOT SUPPORT A PARTY CONTROLLED BY ALEMAN

14. (C) Eventually the discussion led to Aleman's role in the PLC, and the Ambassador repeated that, while we respect Liberal ideology and the PLC as an institution, we cannot maintain friendly relations with a party controlled by a convicted felon. Thus, if the PLC seeks positive relations with us, it needs to separate from Aleman, reform its leadership structure, and hold multi-party primaries. The Ambassador also declined Ramirez, suggestion that, rather than supporting multi-party primaries, the Embassy help broker negotiations among these parties -- a deal which could well seal Rizo,s candidacy, with the possibility of Eduardo Montealegre as his running mate.

15. (C) After a tense moment of silence, Maria Fernanda -- bedecked with flashy gold jewelry that shone against the backdrop of a deep tan cultivated during her Holy Week vacation at the beach -- declared that her husband is suffering from a "political persecution" and claimed that his sentence has not been "confirmed." She insisted that Aleman will not run for any government office and pleaded, "let us breathe." Maria Fernanda commented that the PLC had demonstrated its political dominance in the March 5 Atlantic Coast elections, despite the fact that Aleman is "imprisoned" and disparaged by the USG. Ambassador countered that the PLC had witnessed a decline in voter support from the previous Atlantic Coast elections and suffered a complete failure in the 2004 municipal elections.

16. (C) Other PLC representatives defended Aleman as a symbol of the party, although only Maria Fernanda refuted his conviction. Teller mentioned "mistakes" during Aleman's tenure, but opined that the Liberals did not have the luxury of maintaining division in the ranks, no matter their personal feelings regarding Aleman. Likewise, the representatives of the minor Liberal parties claimed that Aleman is willing to &compromise for the sake of unity8 and that the Liberals must focus on the primary goal of defeating the FSLN. Notably, Jose Rizo did not join the Aleman debate, only repeating his desire for "good relations" with the USG and the need to join forces to confront the FSLN.

HERRERA CONCERNED ABOUT MONTEALEGRE'S CHALLENGE

17. (C) Rene Herrera complained about the USG's alleged preference for Liberal challenger Eduardo Montealegre. He claimed that Montealegre's image as the "gringo candidate" will hurt him in the polls and could damage the PLC if Montealegre eventually joins with the party as its vice presidential candidate. Herrera admitted that PLC deputy-hopefuls will likely defect to Montealegre's camp if they are not selected by the PLC, and that this division will further weaken the party. He also lambasted the National Assembly deputies that support Montealegre for not backing an

"authentic interpretation" of the Electoral Law (ref C), claiming that Montealegre is caving in to a Sandinista takeover of the CSE in exchange for the CSE's approval of his alliance's name change. (Comment: Herrera's rant likely reveals a visible concern over Montealegre's strength. End Comment.)

USG POSITION ON ALEMAN HAS NOT CHANGED

18. (U) After the meeting concluded, the Ambassador provided a statement to a gaggle of reporters, indicating that we had been invited by the PLC to discuss the primary proposal. He repeated that the USG has no quarrel with Liberalism as an ideology, clearly underscoring that the USG's position on Arnaldo Aleman is clear and unchanged.

COMMENT: WORRIED, BUT STILL NOT WILLING TO LET GO OF ALEMAN

19. (C) The meeting was part of Embassy's strategy to exhaust all possible efforts to arrange multi-party primaries, which could have led to Liberal unity without Arnaldo Aleman's control and likely a candidate not as malleable as Rizo. Not surprisingly, the PLC leadership declined to participate in the primaries. In the PLC's efforts to balance allegiance to Aleman with the necessity to cultivate friendly relations with the USG and achieve Liberal unity before the elections, it was evident that Aleman's influence prevails. Maria Fernanda's presence was a clear sign that Aleman is still pulling the PLC's strings, even though PLC members have admitted privately that they feel the PLC cannot win the elections without USG support and if they have to compete against Montealegre. To counter the PLC's and media's twisting of the outcome of this meeting, the Ambassador will visit ALN-PC headquarters and meet with Eduardo Montealegre and his party leadership. The event will allow the Ambassador to note that the ALN-PC is the only party that welcomes multi-party primaries, and to reiterate our position that a PLC under Aleman's control is a non-starter.

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